

## 1 IN THE CLAIMS:

- 2 1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for treating comminuted meats, the apparatus  
3 including:  
4 (a) a contact container;  
5 (b) a pH increasing material inlet in the contact container;  
6 (c) a supply of ammonia-based pH increasing material connected to the pH increasing  
7 material inlet;  
8 (d) a further comminuting device connected to receive comminuted meat from the  
9 contact container; and  
10 (e) a pump operatively connected to pump comminuted meat from the contact  
11 container to the further comminuting device.  
12
- 13 2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the contact container comprises a conduit  
14 through which the comminuted meat is displaced.  
15
- 16 3. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 further including a number of additional pH  
17 increasing material inlets into the contact container, each additional pH increasing  
18 material inlet being operatively connected to the supply of ammonia-based pH increasing  
19 material to facilitate the flow of ammonia-based pH increasing material into the contact  
20 container.  
21
- 22 4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the further comminuting device comprises a  
23 grinder.

- 1        5.        (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 further including an initial comminuting device  
2                operatively connected to form an initial comminuted meat and transfer the initial  
3                comminuted meat into the contact container.  
4
- 5        6.        (Original) The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the initial comminuting device comprises a  
6                grinder having a first grind size and wherein the further comminuting device comprises a  
7                grinder having a second grind size, the second grind size being less than the first grind  
8                size.  
9
- 10       7.        (Original) The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the initial comminuting device comprises a  
11               grinder having a grind size in the range of approximately one-half (1/2) inch to  
12               approximately three-eighths (3/8) inch and wherein the further comminuting device  
13               comprises a grinder having a grind size of no more than approximately three sixteenths  
14               (3/16) inch.  
15
- 16       8.        (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the pH increasing material inlet  
17               includes an opening into the contact container having a maximum dimension less than a  
18               minimum dimension of the ~~ammonia-contacting arrangement~~ contact container.  
19
- 20       9.        (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the contact container includes a portion  
21               having a comminuted meat flow area defined between a first wall and an opposing second  
22               wall, and wherein the dimension between the first wall and second wall is no greater than  
23               a grind size associated with the comminuted meat.

1 10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the pH increasing material inlet includes an  
2 opening into the contact container through one of the first wall or second wall.

3  
4 11. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the further comminuting device comprises a  
5 bowl chopper.

6  
7 12. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for treating comminuted meats, the apparatus  
8 including:

- 9 (a) a contact conduit having an inlet opening at a first end and an outlet opening at a  
10 second end;  
11 (b) a pH increasing material inlet in the contact conduit;  
12 (c) a supply of ammonia-based pH increasing material connected to the pH increasing  
13 material inlet;  
14 (d) a further comminuting device connected to receive material displaced from the  
15 contact conduit through the outlet opening thereof; and  
16 (e) a displacement device operatively connected to the inlet opening of the contact  
17 conduit to facilitate [[the]] a displacement of comminuted meat into the contact  
18 conduit through the inlet opening and through the contact conduit from the inlet  
19 opening to the outlet opening.

20  
21 13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 12 further including an inlet conduit operatively  
22 connecting the displacement device to the inlet opening of the contact conduit and an

1 outlet conduit operatively connecting the outlet opening of the contact conduit and the  
2 further comminuting device.

3  
4 14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 13 further including an initial comminuting device  
5 operatively connected to form an initial comminuted meat and supply the initial  
6 comminuted meat to the displacement device.

7  
8 15. (Original) The apparatus of claim 14 wherein the initial comminuting device comprises a  
9 grinder having a first grind size and wherein the further comminuting device comprises a  
10 grinder having a second grind size, the second grind size being less than the first grind  
11 size.

12  
13 16. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim ~~[[15]]~~ 14 wherein the initial comminuting  
14 device comprises a grinder having a grind size in the range of approximately one-half  
15 (1/2) inch to approximately three-eighths (3/8) inch and wherein the further comminuting  
16 device comprises a grinder having a grind size of no more than approximately three  
17 sixteenths (3/16) inch.

18  
19 17. (Original) An apparatus for treating comminuted meats, the apparatus including:  
20 (a) a contact container;  
21 (b) a pH increasing material inlet in the contact container;  
22 (c) a supply of ammonia-based pH increasing material connected to the pH increasing  
23 material inlet; and

1 (d) a further comminuting device; and

2 (e) a material transfer arrangement for transferring comminuted meat from the contact  
3 container to the further comminuting device.

4  
5 18. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 17 wherein the ~~conveyance~~ material  
6 transfer arrangement includes an outlet conduit connected to an outlet opening of the  
7 contact container and extending to an inlet hopper of the further comminuting device.

8  
9 19. (Original) The apparatus of claim 18 wherein the contact container comprises a contact  
10 conduit through which a comminuted meat may be displaced from an inlet opening to the  
11 outlet opening.

12  
13 20. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 19 wherein:

14 (a) the contact conduit includes a portion having a comminuted meat flow area  
15 defined between a first wall and an opposing second wall;

16 (b) the dimension between the first wall and second wall is no greater than a grind  
17 size associated with the comminuted meat; and

18 (c) ~~[[a]]~~ the pH increasing material inlet is located in one of the first wall or second  
19 wall.